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## Four Poems

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## PÁDRAIG MACAOIDH

Pádraig MacAoidh is originally from the Isle of Lewis in Scotland, but is now a Research Fellow at the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry in Belfast. His poetry and journalism has appeared in various journals in Scotland and Ireland.

At the moment he is working, among other things, on an anthology of transgressive Scottish Gaelic verse.

## CH

bha leth-cnàimheach  
 's leth-cnàimheach eile  
 trì femur 's sùil na leise  
 iochdair na bronn gu Tuath 's gu Deas  
 's làmh asnaichean ag osnaich  
 troimh'n talamh treabhthe

's pìos claigeann phàisde  
 a' neadachadh  
 anns a' pheilbhis deasach,  
 grian-gheal gu gealach-ghile  
 im sailte air sliobadh rèidh  
 fosail glàiste an aghaidh time  
 gar magadh 's a' lannireadh  
 bho siol gu ùgh gu omega

nuair a dh'fhosgail thu an toll fodha  
 le do sgian-lèith  
 dh'èirich gu slaodach  
 ch  
 dhutsa cha robh anns an fhuaim  
 ach faodail,  
 ach ait'-a-choireigin  
 bha dùthaich chloinne a' caoidh  
 call gach freumh dhòchais

## O

there was a half-skeleton  
 and another  
 three femurs and a thigh-eye  
 pelvii to North and to South  
 and a hand of ribs sighing open  
 through the plough layer

and the cut of an infant skull  
 nesting  
 in the southern pelvis  
 sunwhite to moonwhite  
 salt butter stroked smooth  
 a fossil locked against time  
 mocking and glimmering  
 from seed to egg to omega

when you the prised open its cavity  
 with your scalpel  
 there rose, slowly, an  
 o  
 for you the sound was just  
 a found treasure  
 but somewhere  
 a country of children mourned  
 the loss of each root of hope

## MUIR-THÀCAR

muir-eòlas

a' mhuir ghruamach bhrùite  
a' cagair  
air euchd-dhàn  
is maighdeannan-mara

muirgheadh

pinnt uisge 'sa mhadainn  
blàs a' mheatailt  
ciont teagamh 's feagal

muir-bhuachaill

sgailc uisge fuar loch shnìosdail  
a' plogadh anail  
fon a' ghrian 's fo iolaire uaibhreach

muir-thuil

bogh'-uisge eadar sgiath 's abhainn  
eoin a' sgiathadaich air a' ghaoith  
glaicte 's saor

muir-dhroighinn

fuaime an fhacail  
dacha  
's blas a' ghiuthais fhluich

muir-bhàite

lìon dhamhain-allaidh  
tuill uisge, a' crathadh  
fras mòmaideach chrìostalan

muirbhleasg

uisge fon deigh mar chuislean  
a' snìomhadh nan speuran  
a' cnàmhadh do chothrom

muir-gheilt

sùilean dùinte falt glaochte air bathais  
thar chluasan air adhart 's air adhart  
gun fhuam ach uisge uisge uisge

muireardach

snighe seasmhach bùrn, uisge samhach donn  
cohall, bagairt ciùin  
abhainn cuyabueno, amazon

muir-chreach

ataireachd àrd, stuagh-chorrach, a' bristeadh  
a' sùigheadh sgeirean, iad fhein a'sgriosadh  
's ag èiridh a-rithist, dall 's gun fhaireachdainn

mùire

uisge siorraidh air abhainn suthainn  
slige luasgain  
sìor-chaochladh

## SEA-SPOIL

### hydrography

the dull and animal night sea  
whispering  
of epics  
and mermaids.

### *colymbus glacialis*

the slap of cold water on loch sniosdail,  
gasping for breath,  
under the sun and a watchful eagle.

### agrimony

the sound of the word  
dacha  
and the smell of wet pine kernels.

### drowning sea

a spider's web,  
a net of water, shaking,  
a momentary shower of crystals.

### stupidity (amazement)

water flowing under ice like veins,  
spinning the sky  
tipping your balance

### mermaid (sea-terror)

eyes closed hair plastered on forehead  
over ears on and on  
no sound but water water water

### amazon

constant drip of rain onto brown still water  
a cocoon, a quiet threat  
cuyabueno river, amazon

### piracy

huge waves, smashing and sucking at rocks, swirling back together,  
destroying themselves  
and rising again, blind and unemotional.

### leprosy

constant rain on a constant river  
an ever changing  
shell of ripples.

### trident

morning pint of water  
metal taste  
guilt fear and doubt

### high-tide (sea-hole)

the arc of water between wing and

### river

as a bird is taking flight  
trapped and free

## **AISLING AN NOIR (Mùirt ann aon duilleag)**

agus a' ghrian mar Jane Doe  
 a' bàsachadh  
 thar a' bhaile bhrùiteil  
 baile mo fhuath  
 baile mo ghaol

gabhaidh mi ouzo  
 gabhaidh mi tapas 's sushi  
 gabhaidh mi tequila  
 leis a' bhoiteag  
 gabhaidh mi guinness  
 gabhaidh mi smuid smuid smuid

lorg iad corp an Glas-neibhinn  
 air uaigh Manley Hopkins  
 coltas *ekthesis*  
 neo bàs co-fhaireachdail  
 thuirt iad gun fhacail  
 air na comharran breuna  
 dubh air an amhaich  
 's dhùin iad a' chùis

tha thu marbh ma-ta  
 's orm fhìn uallach  
 (diochuimhneach)  
 an fhìrinn a thuigsinn  
 mar a bhàsaich thu  
 's mar a ghabh thu slighe  
 eadar an traigh-mhòr  
 is Glas-neibhinn  
 le ròpa mu d'aimhich  
 le Hopkins nad làimh

thig mi tarsainn an àth  
 o tuath gu deas 's air ais  
 am baile mar lion stàilinn  
 glainne 's cruadhtan, 's mise  
 peilear an dòchais  
 diochuimhnichidh mi  
 mar a bhàsaich iair an traigh-mhòr

bha mi eòlach oirre  
 gu follaiseach  
 a falt fada bànn  
 's na cìochan rèidh  
 's a guth mar phuinnsean  
 mar mil  
 neo chailceadon  
 dòchas eu-dòchas u-dòchas

's mar a tha blàs a' bhàis  
 cho tiugh ri neochiont  
 cho aotrom ri gàire  
 cho doillear ri briseadh an là  
 air mo làmhan dubh dubh

## **AISLING NOIR (a murder in one page)**

and the sun like a Jane Doe  
 choked  
 over the brute city  
 the city I hate  
 the city I love

I'll have an ouzo  
 I'll have tapas and sushi  
 I'll have tequila  
 with The Worm  
 I'll have guinness  
 I'll have my fill fill fill

they found a corpse in Glasnevin  
 on the grave of Manley Hopkins  
 looked like *ekthesis*  
 or sympathetic death  
 they said without a word  
 on the rancid marks  
 black on her throat  
 and closed the case

so you are dead then  
 and mine alone the need  
 (forgetful)  
 to find the truth  
 how you died  
 how you made your way  
 from Traigh-mhòr  
 to Glasnevin  
 with a rope round your neck  
 and Hopkins in your hand

I'll cross the ford  
 from north to south and back  
 the city a net of steel  
 glass and concrete, and me  
 the bullet of hope

I'll forget  
 how she died  
 on the Traigh-Mhòr

I knew her  
 clearly  
 long fair heart  
 perfect breasts  
 and voice like poison  
 like honey  
 chalcedony  
 hope newhope hopeless

and the taste of death  
 as thick as innocence  
 as light as laughter  
 as dark as daybreak  
 on my noir noir noir hands

## EOIN MARBH / DEAD BIRDS

tha na faoilleagan a' cluiche na circe  
le na caraichean air an rathad  
tro Bharabhas – a' ruith  
mar sgàileanan briste  
bhon dig gu chorp a' chait

tha na feannagan  
bun-os-cionnn  
a' tomhais  
sgàil a' feins

an gleann shnìosdail  
tha corp na h-iolaire anathema  
chan fhaigh faoilleag neo feannag spèis  
an eachdraidh an rìgh

the gulls are playing chicken  
with cars on the road  
through Barvas – running  
like broken umbrellas  
from the ditch to the cat's corpse

the hoodies  
are upside-down  
measuring  
the shadow of the fence

in glen snìosdail  
the eagle's corpse is anathema  
there is no respect for gull or hoodie  
in the history of the king